

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for assigning functions between participants in a communications arrangement comprising a plurality of participants, the method comprising the steps of:  
assigning, to a first participant from the plurality of participants, one or more functions to be performed by the first participant;  
prior to a failure of the first participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant, designating a second participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied;  
the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied, assigning the one or more functions to the second participant.
2. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising:  
unassigning the one or more functions from the first participant, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied; and  
wherein the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises the first participant communicating directly with the second participant via a single wireless connection between the first participant and the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

3. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising:  
prior to a failure of the second participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant, designating a third participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied, assigning the one or more functions to the third participant, and unassigning the one or more functions from the second participant.
4. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:  
the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between the plurality of participants; and  
communications between the plurality of participants are made using a frequency hopping sequence according to a frequency hopping protocol.
5. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the steps of designating the second participant and the first participant communicating directly with the second participant are performed during a time period that begins with assigning the one or more functions to the first participant and ends with any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied.
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the communications arrangement is a wireless communications arrangement and at least one of the first participant and the second participant is a mobile device.

9. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include at least one criterion that is selected from the group consisting of a request from the first participant, the first participant not communicating within a specified amount of time, a failure of the first participant, the first participant being out of range of one or more other participants from the plurality of participants, and a power level of the first participant falling below a specified threshold.
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:  
the first participant is a master participant,  
the second participant is a slave participant prior to being assigned to perform the one or more functions, and  
the second participant is an associate master participant after being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.
14. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the second participant is designated by the first participant.
15. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the second participant is designated by one or more participants from the plurality of participants other than the first participant.

16. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more instructions for assigning functions between participants in a communications arrangement, the one or more sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of:  
assigning, to a first participant from the plurality of participants, one or more functions to be performed by the first participant;  
prior to a failure of the first participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant, designating a second participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied;  
the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,  
assigning the one or more functions to the second participant.
17. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, further comprising:  
one or more sequences of additional instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to unassign the one or more functions from the first participant, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied; and

wherein the instructions for the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises one or more sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the step of the first participant communicating directly with the second participant via a single wireless connection between the first participant and the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, further comprising one or more sequences of additional instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to prior to a failure of the second participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant, designating a third participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied, assigning the one or more functions to the third participant, and unassigning the one or more functions from the second participant.
19. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein:  
the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between the plurality of participants; and  
communications between the plurality of participants are made using a frequency hopping sequence according to a frequency hopping protocol.
20. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the steps of designating the second participant and the first

participant communicating directly with the second participant are performed during a time period that begins with assigning the one or more functions to the first participant and ends with any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied.

21. (Cancelled)
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the communications arrangement is a wireless communications arrangement and at least one of the first participant and the second participant is a mobile device.
24. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include at least one criterion that is selected from the group consisting of a request from the first participant, the first participant not communicating within a specified amount of time, a failure of the first participant, the first participant being out of range of one or more other participants from the plurality of participants, and a power level of the first participant falling below a specified threshold.
25. (Cancelled)
26. (Cancelled)
27. (Cancelled)
28. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein:  
the first participant is a master participant,

the second participant is a slave participant prior to being assigned to perform the one or more functions, and

the second participant is an associate master participant after being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the second participant is designated by the first participant.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the second participant is designated by one or more participants from the plurality of participants other than the first participant.

31. (Previously Presented) A communications device comprising:  
an interface configured to receive data from a plurality of communications devices and to transmit data to the plurality of communications devices; and  
a mechanism communicatively coupled to the interface and configured to:  
perform one or more functions; and  
prior to a failure of the communications device that prevents the communications device from performing any of the one or more functions,  
designate a particular communications device from the plurality of communications devices to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
communicate directly with the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
wherein the particular communications device performs the one or more functions, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied.

32. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein:  
the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between  
the plurality of communications devices; and  
communications between the plurality of participants are made using a frequency  
hopping sequence according to a frequency hopping protocol.
33. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein  
the communications device is a wireless communications device and at least one of the  
communications device and the particular communications device is a mobile device.
34. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein  
the one or more handoff criteria include at least one criterion that is selected from the  
group consisting of a request from the communications device, the communications  
device not communicating within a specified amount of time, a failure of the  
communications device, the communications device being out of range of one or more  
other communications devices from the plurality of communications devices, and a  
power level of the communication device falling below a specified threshold.
35. (Cancelled)
36. (Cancelled)
37. (Cancelled)
38. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein:  
the communications device is a master participant;  
the particular communications device is a slave participant prior to performing the one  
or more functions; and  
the particular communications device is an associate master participant after being  
designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more  
handoff criteria are satisfied.

39. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein:  
the mechanism is further configured to not perform the one or more functions, in  
response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied; and  
the mechanism being configured to communicate directly with the particular  
communications device to indicate that the particular communications device  
has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or  
more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises the mechanism being  
configured to communicate directly with the particular communications device  
via a single wireless connection between the communications device and the  
particular communications device to indicate that the particular  
communications device has been designated to perform the one or more  
functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.
40. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein:  
prior to a failure of the particular communications device that prevents the particular  
communications device from performing any of the one or more functions  
assigned to the particular communications device, an additional  
communications device from the plurality of communications devices is  
designated to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff  
criteria are satisfied;  
in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,  
the one or more functions are performed by the additional communications  
device, and  
the one or more functions are no longer performed by the particular  
communications device.
41. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein  
the mechanism is configured to designate the second participant and communicate  
directly with the particular communications device during a time period that begins

with the mechanism starting to perform the one or more functions and ends with any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied.

42. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the mechanism designating the particular communications device is based on the mechanism selecting the particular communications device.

43. (Currently Amended) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the mechanism designating the particular communications device is based on one or more communications devices from the plurality of communications devices, other than the communications device, selecting the particular communications device.

44. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the mechanism being configured to communicate directly with the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises the mechanism being configured to:  
send a first packet directly to the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
receive a second packet directly from the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device accepts being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

45. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 44, wherein the particular communications device performing the one or more functions, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied, further comprises the mechanism being configured to:  
send a third packet directly to the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device is to perform the one or more functions; and

receive a fourth packet directly from the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device accepts responsibility for performing the one or more functions.

46. (Previously Presented) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include expiration of a timer; the particular communications device starts the timer in response to the communications device communicating directly with the particular communications device; the particular communications device restarts the timer each time the communications device communicates with the particular communications device; and the timer expires when the communications device does not communicate with the particular communications device for a specified amount of time.

47. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises the steps of:  
the first participant sending a first packet directly to the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and  
the first participant receiving a second packet directly from the second participant to indicate that the second participant accepts being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

48. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 47, wherein assigning the one or more functions to the second participant, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied, further comprises the steps of:  
the first participant sending a third packet directly to the second participant to indicate that the second participant is to perform the one or more functions; and

the first participant receiving a fourth packet directly from the second participant to indicate that the second participant accepts responsibility for performing the one or more functions.

49. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include expiration of a timer; the second participant starts the timer in response to the first participant communicating directly with the second participant; the second participant restarts the timer each time the first participant communicates with the second participant; and the timer expires when the first participant does not communicate with the second participant for a specified amount of time.

50. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the instructions for the first participant communicating directly with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied further comprises one or more sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of: the first participant sending a first packet directly to the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and the first participant receiving a second packet directly from the second participant to indicate that the second participant accepts being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

51. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 50, wherein the instructions for assigning the one or more functions to the second participant, in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,

further comprising one or more sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

the first participant sending a third packet directly to the second participant to indicate that the second participant is to perform the one or more functions; and

the first participant receiving a fourth packet directly from the second participant to indicate that the second participant accepts responsibility for performing the one or more functions.

52. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein
  - the one or more handoff criteria include expiration of a timer;
  - the second participant starts the timer in response to the first participant communicating directly with the second participant;
  - the second participant restarts the timer each time the first participant communicates with the second participant; and
  - the timer expires when the first participant does not communicate with the second participant for a specified amount of time.